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Balfour Declaration
Lesson plan by Zion Ozeri and Josh Feinberg



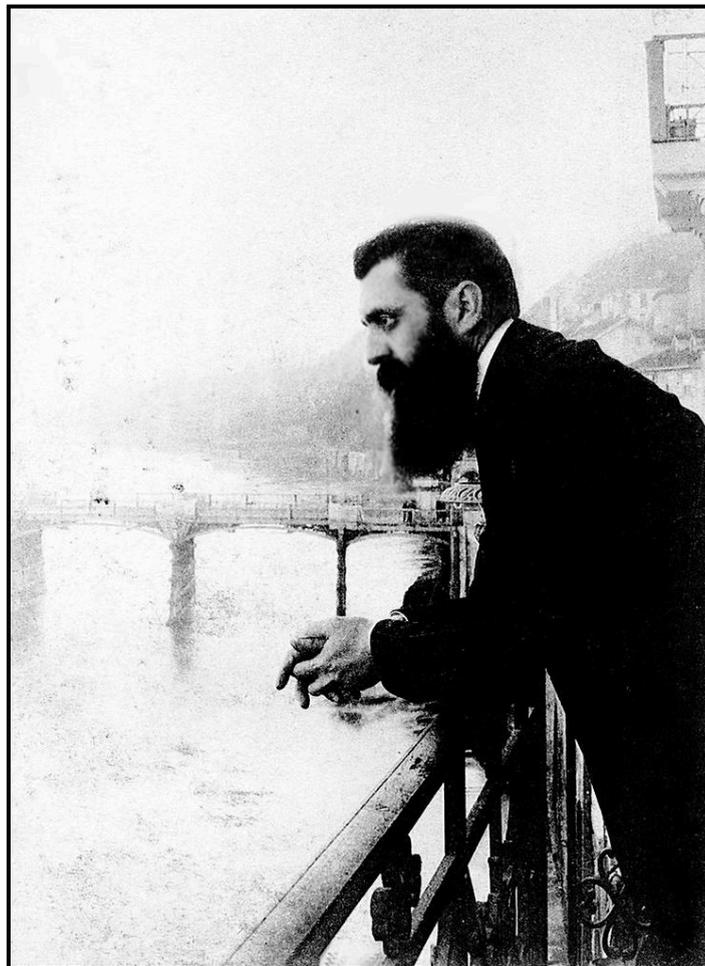
#44 Balfour Street, Tel-Aviv, Israel, 2024
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Look closely at this photograph.

Discuss:

- What do you see in this photograph? Describe the scene? What are some of the elements you notice?
- What is the mood of the picture? What feelings does it evoke? Why?
- What do you see on the balcony? What does it make you think of?
- Think about what the photographer chose to include in the photograph. How do the different elements of the photograph relate to each other?

Now look at this photograph.



File: [Herzl-balcony.jpg](#) - [Wikimedia Commons](#) - Photographer Unknown

It shows Theodor Herzl, the “Father of Modern Zionism,” in Basel, Switzerland, around 1900.

- What similarities do you see between the two images? What differences?
- How does this historical photograph influence your reading of the modern one?

The modern photograph was taken in Tel-Aviv in 2024. While the photo doesn't explicitly relate to Herzl, the statues on the balcony echo the famous image of Herzl. You can also see that the photographer, Zion Ozeri, chose to place the street sign in a prominent spot in the picture. That's because this street is named for Lord Arthur Balfour, another important figure in the history of modern Zionism.

Balfour was a British political leader. In 1917, Lord Balfour sent a letter to Lord Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish Community. England at the time ruled the area that's now Israel, after conquering it from the Ottoman Empire.

Read Balfour's letter below:

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Y. in
Arthur Balfour

[Balfour Declaration - Wikipedia](#)

Discuss:

- On whose behalf did Balfour write this letter? Who ultimately was the letter intended for?
- What does the letter say about England's intentions in the Land of Israel? (The Romans had renamed the area "Palestine" after the ancient Philistines who lived in the area.)
- How do you understand the phrase "a national home for the Jewish people"? What do you think it meant in this context? What does it mean to you today?
- What do you think he meant when he wrote "nothing will be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine"?
- How do you think Zionist leaders reacted to this statement?
- What challenges do you think still laid ahead for the British and Jews in their endeavor?

Learn more about the Balfour Declaration here:

[The Balfour Declaration - Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

[Balfour Declaration - History.com](#)

[The Balfour Declaration - National Library of Israel](#)

[Arthur Balfour - Jewish Virtual Library](#)

Follow-up activities:

- Take a photograph of a place near you that's named for a renowned person or historical event. Do a little research to learn more about this person or event. Why was this name chosen to represent this place?

Optional:

- Many street and place names in Israel are named for famous leaders and historical figures. Research the historical namesake of a street in Israel and write a short biography. How does this person relate to the history of this place?